



Georgians for Responsible Marijuana Policy (GRMP) represents a balanced, scientific approach to cannabis misuse and dependence prevention.

Georgians for Responsible Marijuana Policy appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony to the House Study Committee on Cannabis Waste and Recycling.

I am Dr. Gregg Raduka. I am the Executive Director of GRMP. My background is in substance abuse prevention and treatment beginning in 1976. My doctorate is from the Institute for Child Study in the Department of Human Development at the University of Maryland.

GRMP also greatly appreciates the concern the Committee has and is giving to the very important issues of cannabis waste and recycling. It is within this context that GRMP desires to communicate the following concerns.

1. Cannabis surplus in relation to the number of production licenses:

As of November 2022, there were approximately **25,000** patients on the GA THC registry. Calculations made by the national organization, Smart Approaches to Marijuana (SAM) and GRMP found the following:

The amount of cannabis that can be grown annually, based on the current 6 production licenses, is sufficient to produce a daily dose of 40 mg of THC for approximately **800,000** patients for one year. Therefore, there will be an enormous amount of surplus cannabis produced in Georgia.

Given the tremendous surplus with just 6 production licenses GRMP strongly recommends maintaining the number of production licenses at 6. A number Georgia legislators have warned of concerns when supply outweighs demand, Possible risks include diversion, particularly if there is not sufficient funding to enforce associated regulations.

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2. Medical Cannabis Products

Lines 3-5 of HR 798 S refer to cannabis “medical products” in general as well as naming a number of such products such as “**derivatives, extracts, cannabinoids, isomers, acids, salts and salts of isomers.**”

Lines 6-8 state that the use of such products “have been and are expected to continue increasing in prevalence and use” and that “manufacturing such products can create considerable volumes of waste.”

There is perhaps an unintended inference in Lines 3-8 that surplus cannabis could be used to produce products in addition the five 5% THC products currently allowed under the Hope Act (THC oil, tinctures, capsules, lotions and skin patches).

Expanding the type of cannabis **medical products** could contain a number of risks, with the primary risk being the levels of THC which can be found in some products. Medical cannabis product THC percentages are as high as 95% in some states, including Florida where “medical shatter” is advertised. “Shatter” is a cannabis **concentrate** which looks like peanut brittle.

Cannabis concentrates are typically concentrated masses of THC with THC percentages as high as 99%. Whole plant marijuana on the street normally measures around 13-14% THC. “Dabbing” (vaping of concentrates) has become particularly popular among youth.

Major concentrates, sometimes referred to as “dabs”



BHO



Budder



Wax



Shatter

Some definitions of other terms found in Lines 4 and 5:

A **derivative** is a compound that is synthesized from an identical compound by a chemical reaction with the replacement of one atom or group of atoms. Modern chemical language now uses the term structural “**analog.**”

A cannabis **extract** is a specific type of cannabis **concentrate**. While concentrates can be made through both various mechanical processes and the use of a solvent, extracts are unique because they are made exclusively through the use of a solvent. Volatile solvents, such as ethanol, butane, propane or hexane, may be used to prepare extracts,

Cannabinoids are the active chemical compounds in cannabis which effect the brain and the nervous system as a whole. The most notable cannabinoids are (1) THC, the primary intoxicating (and often addictive) compound in cannabis, and (2) CBD. There are more than 100 cannabinoids in marijuana.

Not specifically mentioned in HR 798S are **synthetic cannabinoids** (street names: Spice or K-2) which are man-made analogs of naturally occurring cannabinoids. In prior years they were referred to as “designer drugs.”

An **isomer** is each of two or more compounds with the same formula but a different arrangement of atoms in the molecule and having different properties

THCa (tetrahydrocannabinolic **acid**) is an inactive cannabinoid contained in the trichomes* of live and freshly harvested cannabis. THCa is a precursor to THC and is converted by heat or light into THC. **THC** is the psychotropic or active version of the same cannabinoid. It is not present in freshly harvested cannabis.

**“Trichomes” are tiny, glandular appendages on the surface of cannabis flowers that produce most of the plant's cannabinoids.*

3. Unintended Effects

Research that can be provided by GRMP shows that unintended effects of THC include impaired brain development and function in youth, effects on pregnancy, suicidal ideation, and traffic deaths and accidents.

4. GRMP can provide information and assistance

If GRMP can be helpful to you, please contact me at admin@letsgetclear.org or at 770) 592-7238.